

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 00602 081042Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0602

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AG

SUBJECT: ALGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETS

1. ON MARCH 5, PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE PRESIDED OPENING SESSION OF ALGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT PALAIS DES NATIONS OUTSIDE ALGIERS. ASSEMBLY HAD BEEN ELECTED FEBRUARY 25. ON PROPOSITION OF 27 DEPUTIES, MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT BITAT UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT. BITAT'S CHOICE FOR THIS OFFICE HAD BEEN WIDELY EXPECTED AND TELEVISION COVERAGE OF OPENING SESSION MADE IT CLEAR THAT "ELECTION" WAS PRO FORMA AFFAIR. AFTER RECEIVING CONGRATULATIONS FROM BOUMEDIENE, BITAT READ TO ASSEMBLY PRE-PREPARED ACCEPTANCE SPEECH PRAISING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ALGERIAN STATE AND PLEDGING COOPERATION WITH POLITICAL AND EXECUTIVE POWERS IN BUILDING NEW SOCIETY.

2. IN MARCH 6TH PLENARY SESSION, COMMERCE MINISTER YAKER AND AHMED METATLA, A LAW PROFESSOR ELECTED FROM SIKKDA, WERE SELECTED TO HEAD, ESPECTIVELY, INTERNAL RULES AND VALIDATION OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEES.

3. COMMENTS FROM VARIOUS EMBASSY SOURCES SUGGEST FOLLOWING ATTITUDES TOWARD ASSEMBLY:
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PAGE 02 ALGIER 00602 081042Z

A. NEW INSTITUTION NOT EXPECTED TO HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE. ALMOST EVERYONE WE SPEAK TO BELIEVES IT LIKELY THAT ASSEMBLY WILL BE SUBORDINATE TO GOVERNMENT AND THAT ELECTION SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

B. ASSEMBLY'S SUBORDINATE POSITION GENERALLY
ACCEPTED WITH A SHRUG, BUT SOME ELEMENTS SEEM TO
DISPPOVE. WE HAVE HEARD FROM SEVERAL SOURCES, FOR
EXAMPLE, THAT LAWYERS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE WERE
EXCLUDED FROM SEEKING OFFICE. THESE POLITICALLY
INTERESTED PEOPLE SAID TO BE MOST DISSATISFIED WITH
WAY NEW SOCIALIST INSTITUTION PUT INTO PLACE.

C. DESPITE DISSATISFACTION IN CAPITAL, EVIDENCE
CONTINUES TO MOUNT THAT ELECTORAL "CAMPAIGN"
HARD FOUGHT IN SOME CASES. WE UNDERSTAND, FOR
EXAMPLE, THAT ONE DEFEATED CANDIDATE WITH GOOD
REVOLUTIONARY CREDENTIALS WHO WORKED HARD TO ASSURE
HIS ELECTION, HAS CHARGED REGIME WITH FRAUD AND IS
TAKING HIS CASE TO THE COURTS.

D. FINALLY, SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF SEEMING REGIME
STALWARTS DEFEATED, BOTH AT POLLS AND IN PRE-ELECTION
MANEUVERING. CLEARLY, A GOOD ALGIERS CONNECTION DID
NOT IN ALL CASES ASSURE ELECTORAL SUCCESS.LYNE

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